

FRANCIS MARION UNIVERSITY

The Prier

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President gives economic outlook of the university



Despite the recent economic downturn, Francis Marion University continues to grow at a steady pace without the need for any drastic changes.

“As for the future of Francis Marion, there will be more of the same – exceptionally strong academic programs combined with aggressive community outreach initiatives, all aimed at improving education at the state and regional level.”

With those words, and a host of examples, FMU President Fred Carter outlined the university's role in the local economy recently at the Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce's Spring Outlook Luncheon.

Carter said, “It is a privilege to be with you today to discuss the impact that Francis Marion University has had on the Pee Dee region, past, present and future.”

He spoke on the past and exhibited a lot of optimism toward the future, both on campus and among the larger FMU family of alumni, parents, community and friends.

FMU's efforts to continue providing educational value were among the

topics discussed by Carter during the program, which took place in the Florence Civic Center.

Carter reviewed some of the university's extraordinary accomplishments in the past decade and looked ahead to the challenges and opportunities in the coming years.

Established in 1970, Carter said Gov. Robert E. McNair often made the comment that FMU was the only university that had developed into what he had envisioned – one in which people in the Lowcountry, Piedmont, the eight counties represented in the Pee Dee region and throughout the state would have an opportunity to receive a quality education.

With 54 percent of its 4,109 students coming from the Pee Dee region and 95 percent from South Carolina, Carter said FMU has proven to be an institution that lives up to its original mission. But students don't just attend FMU and leave, he said. Fifty-three percent of the 16,760 alumni remain in the Pee Dee and 81 percent in South Carolina.

An expansion of university offerings in liberal arts disciplines, business, education, and the health sciences was also highlighted by Carter. In addition, he cited the following FMU community outreach initiatives: Center for Entrepreneurship; Kelley Small Business Institute, Richardson Center for the Child, Center of Excellence to Prepare Teachers of Children of Poverty, Pee Dee Health Education Consortium, FMU Center for the Performing Arts (2010), Non-Profit Leadership Institute, Rural Area Leadership Institute, Advancing Rural Community Health, the Robert E. McNair Center for Government and History, and the Robert E. McNair Scholars.

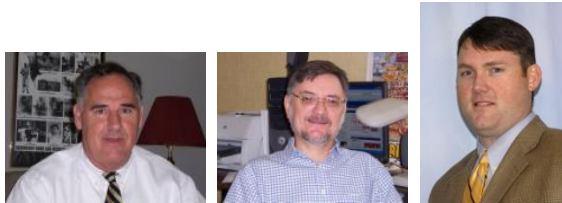
The FMU Education Foundation and Non-Profit Consortium were also mentioned in Carter's presentation. Housed in this facility are the North Eastern Strategic Alliance, FMU Trail Commission and Pee Dee Land Trust.

As his speech drew to a close, Carter announced that FMU's Campaign for Excellence of seven and a half years had ended with a record-setting \$50 million, eclipsing its original goal. The campaign was started in 2001 to support university programs, faculty development, facilities, scholarships and endowment and athletics. The first ever fund-raising effort in the university's history far surpassed the original target.

The culmination of his speech was to report the findings of the Economic Impact Study recently released by three university economists. The results of the study reveal that FMU's regional economic impact totals more than \$78 million and nearly 1,000 jobs annually, Carter said.

"These are wonderful data produced by my colleagues in business and they show the broad impact this institution has on the economy of the Pee Dee," said FMU President Fred Carter. "Nearly 40 years of partnerships throughout the region have resulted in an improved quality of life for its citizenry, many aspects of which simply cannot be measured."

FMU's impact on the Pee Dee region exceeds \$78 million



(L-R) O'Brien, Pompe, Munn

Francis Marion University's regional economic impact totals more than \$78 million and nearly 1,000 jobs annually, according to a study recently released by three university economists.

Dean of the School of Business and Associate Professor of Economics Barry O'Brien, Assistant Professor of Economics Jonathan G. Munn and Professor of Economics Jeffrey Pompe compiled the research specifically for the Pee Dee region.

The three spending measures used by researchers when conducting the study based on 2007-08 data were annual analyses of ongoing university operational budgets, capital expenditures and construction and the projected impact of the FMU Performing Arts Center to be completed in the fall of 2010.

"There is no way to capture every dollar that is spent, but we did try to include major expenditures in categories which include housing and spending at restaurants and shops," O'Brien said. "We wanted to determine how much regional economic activity is due to the university's presence."

The analysis found that the total annual economic contribution from FMU's ongoing operations is \$78,150,445 with a creation of 994 jobs each year. The economic contribution to the Pee Dee from FMU's construction and improvements from 2001-08 is \$60,717,395. An estimated \$52,003,250 is the impact economists believe the FMU Performing Arts Center will have on the economy in the region.

The direct economic impact of that spending, plus the indirect and induced impact as dollars re-circulate among local business and households in terms of salaries, goods and services, yields the \$78 million total impact.

FMU President Fred Carter said that while the university's economic benefit to the community is immeasurable, it is underscored by the institution's commitment to providing a quality education to its students.

"Francis Marion is above all else a university known for the strength of its faculty and the quality of its degrees," he added. "The economic impact of this institution on the Pee Dee, and for that matter the entire state, is an added benefit of our greater mission."

Recent FMU News



[FMU's Libby Cooper receives leadership award](#)

Francis Marion University Vice President for Public and Community Affairs Libby Cooper was honored Thursday by the Girl Scouts of Eastern South Carolina as one of nine recipients of the Mary Dean Brewer Women of Distinction Award.

The award is presented annually to women living and working in eastern South Carolina who have demonstrated significant achievement in their fields of endeavor, made contributions affecting their local and/or broad communities and acted as positive role models for today's young women, who will one day follow her.

[FMU to host 32nd-annual Art's Alive Festival, April 4](#) [Spring Open House attracts record attendance](#)

Faculty News

Terri L. Earnest, assistant professor of sociology, attended the Southern Rural Sociological Association meetings in Atlanta, Ga., at the beginning of February. She presented part of a paper that she and **Lisa A. Eargle**, associate professor of sociology, are working on titled "The Meth Epidemic: A Descriptive and Comparative Analysis of Response Programs."

Lisa A. Eargle, associate professor of sociology, and **John Porter Lillis**, assistant professor of sociology, co-organized and co-presented a workshop on Geographic Information Systems, titled "Integrating Geographic

Information Systems into Sociology Courses” at the South Carolina Sociological Association’s annual meeting Feb. 20 in Charleston. Eargle also presented at a panel session about abolishing parole in South Carolina. The panel session was titled "Should Parole Be Eliminated? A Response to the Attorney General's Proposal," and was both organized and moderated by **Terri L. Earnest**, assistant professor of sociology.

In addition, Professor of Sociology **Joel Thayer** who is also chair of the Department of Sociology, and Associate Professor of Sociology **Rusty Ward** who serves as treasurer and secretary for the conference, also attended the South Carolina Sociological Association’s annual meeting Feb. 20 in Charleston.

Jon Tuttle, professor of English, has two books to be released soon. The Trustus Plays (Intellect Books Inc.) includes his plays The Hammerstone, Drift and Holy Ghost. It’s available in the United States from the University of Chicago Press. Two South Carolina Plays (Hub City Press) includes his plays The White Problem and Holy Ghost, as well as essays by local historians John Hammond Moore and Michael Mounter. His new play, The Sweet Abyss, will open at Trustus Theatre in Columbia in August.

Assistant Business Professor **Joe Aniello** and Professor **Susan Peters**, director of the Center for Entrepreneurship, presented work at the annual conference of the United States Association of Small Business and Entrepreneurship (USASBE) Jan. 8-11 in Anaheim, Calif. Aniello co-presented “Building Bridges: Connecting University ‘E’ Spirit Programs with Local Communities.” Peters was a panelist for the forum “Entrepreneurship Centers: Past, Present and Future” in which Aniello and Dean of the School of Business **Barry O’Brien** were also contributors.

Business Professor **Neil Riley**’s article titled “A Test of Market Efficiency using a Probabilistic Neural Network” will soon appear in the Journal of Business and Behavioral Science. This study employs a probabilistic neural network (PNN) to determine the buy/sell signals for stocks. A new method is presented for using a PNN and a correlation factor based on the PNN results, to determine which stocks are likely to be both significant and profitable. Also, insight is provided for the PNN parameters while giving values that produce the best results. As detailed in this study, the PNN shows promise as the basis for developing trading strategies that may earn abnormal profits.

Other news

Applications for photography exhibit are being accepted

The [Florence Downtown Development Corporation](#) announces applications

are being accepted for a photography exhibit to take place from March 31st to April 25th at the Art Trail Gallery (formerly Kimbrell's Furniture Building) 135 S. Dargan Street in downtown Florence. For additional information, contact Jane Madden at (843)673-0729 or by email at janemadden@bellsouth.net.

Honors Student Association seeks books for Book Sale at Art's Alive

Once again, at Art's Alive on Saturday, April 4, the FMU Honors Student Association will hold its annual Recycled Reading Used Book Sale. HSA is calling on faculty and staff to donate any books they think other readers could enjoy. Donations should be taken to Founders Hall, room 155. For book pickups, contact Professor of English and the Director of Honors Program Pamela Rooks at ext. 1526.

Scholarships offered to FMU family members

The sons, daughters, stepsons and stepdaughters of members of the FMU family are eligible to receive scholarships in the amount of \$100 per semester as entering full-time FMU freshmen. This scholarship will be repeated for as long as the student is enrolled as a full-time student at FMU and as long as the student maintains satisfactory progress.

Employees with dependents who will be attending FMU who are eligible for this scholarship, please see Becky Culbertson in the HR office to request a form so we can begin paperwork to initiate this process.

The Crier keeps the campus community, business and community leaders and friends of FMU informed about the university. The Crier is distributed monthly. Submit copy to the editor by March 26 for the April 1 edition. Contact the editor, Angela Crosland at acrosland@fmarion.edu or at ext. 1227.